

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5195
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, NZ
SUBJECT: CONTINENTAL CIVIL AVIATION NEGOTIATIONS

REF: WEXLER-IMUS LETTER OF MARCH 1, 1978 (NOTAL)

1. PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING MESSAGE (WHICH MAY BE DECLASSIFIED ON RECEIPT) TO HARVEY J. WEXLER, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, CONTINENTAL AIRLINES, WASHINGTON, D.C., 296-2184, FROM RICHARD IMUS:
2. YOUR LETTER OF MARCH 1, 1978, HAS BEEN CONVEYED TO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND FOLLOWED UP WITH A PERSONAL CALL ON DEPUTY SECRETARY HEALY MARCH 17. GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND (GNZ) APPRECIATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM AND FEELS THAT SOME OF THE UNEASE EXISTING ON BOTH SIDES CAN BE ALLEVIATED AFTER A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING HERE. GNZ PROPOSES CONTINENTAL TEAM VISIT WELLINGTON DURING FIRST HALF OF MAY FOR SUCH DISCUSSIONS.
3. FOLLOWING UP ON YOUR LETTER, I ATTEMPTED TO ELICIT SPECIFIC POINTS GNZ WISHED TO COVER IN MEETING BUT WAS TOLD THE RANGE OF TOPICS WAS SO GREAT THAT THEY DID NOT WISH TO LIMIT THEMSELVES BY CITING JUST A FEW

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SPECIFICS. AFTER SOME ADDITIONAL URGING, THEY DID COMMENT THAT THE TWO BIG TOPICS WOULD BE, NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, FARES AND GENERAL CAPACITY. ON THE LATTER, THE GNZ REMAINS UNCONVINCED FROM THE EARLIER MATERIAL GIVEN THEM THAT CONTINENTAL WILL INDEED DEVELOP NEW TRAFFIC AND NOT JUST BLEED EXISTING PASSENGERS FROM AIR NEW ZEALAND AND PAN AM. GNZ, WHICH SAYS IT IS AS MUCH

INTERESTED IN FURTHERING TOURIST TRAFFIC TO NZ AS LOOKING
AFTER AIR NEW ZEALAND, PARTICULARLY
WISHES TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW CONTINENTAL PLANS TO MARKET
THIS AREA IN THE U.S.

4. THE U.S. CABOTAGE FARE TO HONOLULU AND PAGO PAGO
STILL BOTHERS THE GNZ. THEY APPRECIATE THAT CONTINENTAL
CAN AFFORD TO FLY TO NEW ZEALAND AT A REDUCED FARE WHEN
THEY CAN HAVE HEAVY LOAD FACTORS ON THE LOS ANGELES-
HONOLULU SECTION, BUT SAY THIS IS NOT ECONOMICALLY
POSSIBLE FOR AIR NEW ZEALAND, WHICH IS DENIED TRAFFIC
OVER THAT KEY ROUTE. THIS WILL BE THE STICKY AREA WITH
THE GNZ, AND CONTINENTAL SHOULD COME AS WELL ARMED AS
POSSIBLE ON THIS POINT.

5. GNZ SEEMS TO BE IN THE MOOD TO REACH SOME TYPE OF
ACCOMMODATION, ALTHOUGH THEY SAY THE ISSUES INVOLVED
ARE VITAL TO AIR NEW ZEALAND AND HENCE THEY EXPECT
SOME FLEXIBILITY ON THE U.S. SIDE AS WELL. MINISTRY
OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED THAT THEY WERE ABLE TO REACH
EASILY AN AMICABLE ARRANGEMENT WITH AMERICAN AIRLINES
(OVER OBJECTIONS OF AIR NEW ZEALAND) SOME YEARS AGO
"ONCE WE HAD GOTTEN TO KNOW EACH OTHER." THEY TRUST
THAT MAY MEETING WILL BE THE FIRST STEP ON REACHING A
LIKE SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT WITH CONTINENTAL.

6. PLEASE ADVISE ASAP IF EARLY MAY DATE FOR VISIT
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ACCEPTABLE AND COMPOSITION OF TEAM CONTINENTAL PLANS
TO SEND. SELDEN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

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